

The Nativity of Our Lord  
Christmas Eve  
December 24, 2020

7:00 p.m.



# WELCOME TO GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



## **Welcome**

In the name of Jesus Christ, we welcome you as we hear God's holy Word. We are blessed by your presence, just as you are. As God welcomes all people through the saving grace of Jesus, so do we seek to welcome God's people of all races, social statuses, physical and mental abilities, sexual orientations, and gender identities to be together in Christ – to love, to grow, and to serve. We worship online in an effort to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and encourage you to follow along in this document as you also watch or listen to the live stream of our service. May the Lord bless our worship this day.

## **Grace Council Statement on Racism**

The events that have unfolded in our nation in recent months have reawakened us to the deep divides that still exist within our country. Racism, manifested in individual acts and present throughout systems, continues to prevent us from being the beloved community that God intends. Our faith in the crucified and risen Christ compels us to speak. We speak against the sin of racism. We speak in solidarity with Black people and all people of color, each of whom is precious to God. We stand with and for Black people within our church and school and in the larger community.

We commit ourselves to following Jesus Christ into the world in the hope that, by the Spirit's power, God's Kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven. We look with hope and anticipation to a season of growth and change as Grace becomes a more faithful witness to God's wide welcome in Christ. We see this as the beginning, not the end, of the conversation. We pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us, and for the courage to follow.

# ✠ GATHERING ✠

**PRELUDE:** Pifa (Pastoral Symphony) from *Messiah*, HW 56

Georg Friedrich Händel

**ENTRANCE HYMN:** Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful

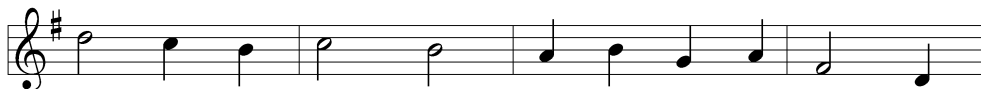
(green) **LBW #45**



1 Oh, come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! Oh,  
 2 The high - est, most ho - ly, light of light e - ter - nal,  
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,  
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;



come ye, oh, come ye to Beth - le - hem;  
 born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes;  
 sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!  
 Je - sus, to thee be . . . glo - ry giv'n!



come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:  
 Son of the Fa - ther now in flesh ap - pear - ing!  
 Glo - ry to God . . . . in . . . the . . . high - est:  
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

*Refrain*



Oh, come, let us a - dore him, oh, come, let us a - dore him,



oh, come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Text: attr. John F. Wade, c. 1711–1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–1880, sts. 1, 3–4; tr. unknown, st. 2

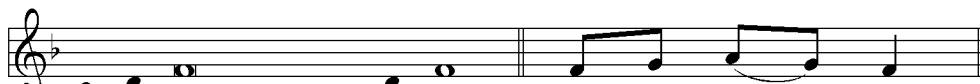
Music: ADESTE FIDELES, attr. John F. Wade, c. 1711–1786

## APOSTOLIC GREETING

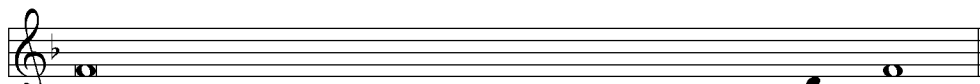
**P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C** And also with you.

## KYRIE



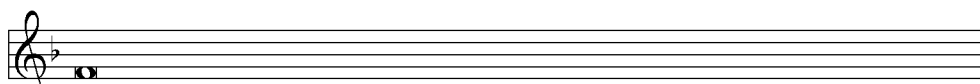
**A** In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.



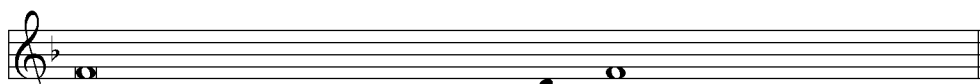
**A** For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



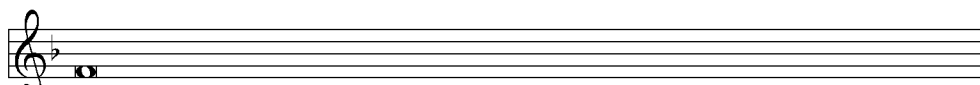
**A** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



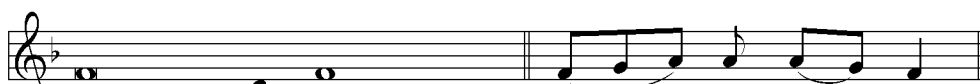
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



**A** For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.



Ⓐ Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra-cious Lord. ☐ A - men

## HYMN OF PRAISE: Glory to God in the Highest



Ⓐ Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his peo-ple on earth.



☐ Lord God, heav-en-ly king, al-might-y God and Fa-ther:



We wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo-ry.



Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God:



You take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



You are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther; re-ceive our prayer.



For you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,



you a-lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho-ly Spir-it,



in the glo-ry of God the Fa-ther. A - men

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And also with you.

**P** Let us pray.

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light.  
Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence  
and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory;  
through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

**ANTHEM:** Christmas

Michael D. Costello

*Background information on the text is printed on page 16 in this worship folder.*

After all pleasures as I rid one day,  
My horse and I, both tired, body and mind,  
With full cry of affections, quite astray;  
I took up the next inn I could find.

There when I came, whom found I but my dear,  
My dearest Lord, expecting till the grief  
Of pleasures brought me to him, ready there  
To be all passengers' most sweet relief?

Oh thou, whose glorious, yet contracted light,  
Wrapt in night's mantle, stole into a manger;  
Since my dark soul and brutish is thy right,  
To man of all beasts be not thou a stranger:

Furnish and deck my soul, that thou mayst have  
A better lodging, than a rack, or grave.

George Herbert, 1593–1633



# ✝ WORD ✝

## FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2–7

<sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. <sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. <sup>4</sup>For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. <sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. <sup>6</sup>For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup>His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

℣ The Word of the Lord.

✠ Thanks be to God.

## PSALM 96

ANTIPHON: Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad!

Michael D. Costello

- ℣ Sing to the LORD | a new song;\*  
sing to the LORD, all | the whole earth.
- ✠ Sing to the LORD and | bless his name;\*  
proclaim the good news of his salvation from | day to day.
- ℣ Declare his glory a- | mong the nations\*  
and his wonders a- | mong all peoples.
- ✠ For great is the LORD and greatly | to be praised;\*  
he is more to be feared | than all gods.
- ℣ As for all the gods of the nations, they | are but idols;\*  
but it is the LORD who | made the heavens.
- ✠ Oh, the majesty and magnificence | of his presence!\*
- Oh, the power and the splendor of his | sanctuary!
- ℣ Ascribe to the LORD, you families | of the peoples;\*  
ascribe to the LORD hon- | or and power.
- ✠ Ascribe to the LORD the honor | due his name;\*  
bring offerings and come in- | to his courts.
- ℣ Worship the LORD in the beau- | ty of holiness;\*  
let the whole earth trem- | ble before him.
- ✠ Tell it out among the nations: “The | LORD is king!\*
- He has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved;  
he will judge the peo- | ples with equity.”

- L** Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;  
 let the sea thunder and all | that is in it;\*  
 let the field be joyful and all that | is therein.
- C** **Then shall all the trees of the wood**  
**shout for joy before the LORD | when he comes,\***  
**when he comes to | judge the earth.**
- L** He will judge the | world with righteousness\*  
 and the peoples | with his truth.

**SECOND READING:** Titus 2:11–14

<sup>11</sup>For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, <sup>12</sup>training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, <sup>13</sup>while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup>He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

**L** The Word of the Lord.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL VERSE:** Luke 2:11

Richard Hillert

Alleluia. To you is born this day a Savior, Christ the Lord. Alleluia.





## HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 2:1–20

\

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.

**C** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” <sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

**P** The Gospel of the Lord.

**C** **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

Pastor David R. Lyle





1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king;  
 2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er-last - ing Lord,  
 3 Hail the heav'n - born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righ-teous-ness!



peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."  
 late in time be - hold him come, off-spring of a vir - gin's womb.  
 Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.



Joy - ful, all you na-tions, rise; join the tri-umph of the skies;  
 Veiled in flesh the God-head see! Hail, in - car-nate de - i - ty!  
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



with an - gel - ic hosts pro-claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
 Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em-man - u - el!  
 born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.



Hark! The her - ald an-gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king!"

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, alt.

Music: MENDELSSOHN, Felix Mendelssohn, 1809–1847; arr. William H. Cummings, 1831–1915

## NICENE CREED

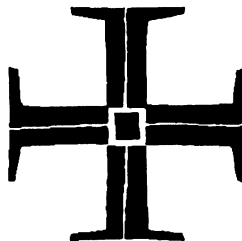
¶ Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith:

☛ We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

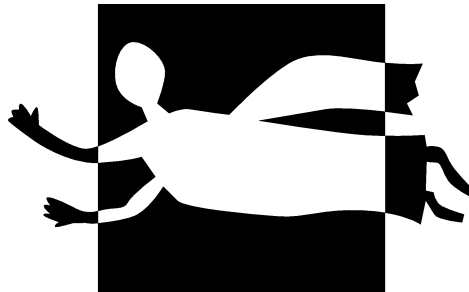


Before the marvel of this night  
Adoring, fold your wings and bow,  
Then tear the sky apart with light  
And with your news the world endow.  
Proclaim the birth of Christ and peace,  
That fear and death and sorrow cease:  
Sing peace, sing peace, sing gift of peace,  
Since peace, sing gift of peace!

Awake the sleeping world with song,  
This is the day the Lord has made,  
Assemble here, celestial throng,  
In royal splendor come arrayed.  
Give earth a glimpse of heavenly bliss,  
A teasing taste of what they miss:  
Sing bliss, sing bliss, sing endless bliss,  
Sing bliss, sing endless bliss!

The love that we have always known,  
Our constant joy and endless light,  
Now to the loveless world be shown,  
Now break upon its deathly night.  
Into one song compress the love  
That rules our universe above:  
Sing love, sing love, sing God is love,  
Sing love, sing God is love!

Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1919–2008



## PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

*Each petition concludes:*

- A** Lord, in your mercy,
- C** hear our prayer.

*The prayers conclude:*

- P** Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray,  
Trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C** Amen.

## LORD'S PRAYER

- L** Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:
- C** Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.

## ✠ SENDING ✠

## BENEDICTION

- P** May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph,  
the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds,  
the determination of the Magi, and the peace of the Christ child.  
Almighty God: the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.
- C** Amen.

*You are encouraged to light a candle in your home and join in singing Silent Night.  
We sing stanza one in German, followed by the three stanzas in English.*


# SENDING HYMN: Silent Night



Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,  
 1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,  
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake  
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,



ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.  
 all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.  
 at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,  
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,



Hol - der Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher  
 Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly  
 heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is  
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your



Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.  
 peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!  
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

## DISMISSAL

**A** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**G** Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: Silent Night

Maurice Boyer  
arr. Jeremy Zimmer

## LEADING WORSHIP TODAY

The Rev. Troy E. Medlin, presiding minister

The Rev. David R. Lyle, preaching minister

The Rev. David Kluge, assisting minister

The Rev. Michael D. Costello, director and harpsichordist

Jeremy Zimmer, organist

Ann Lucking Anderson, soprano

Kjerstin Anderson, alto

David Anderson, baritone

Douglas Anderson, baritone

Meg Busse, oboe

Meg Lanfear, violin 1

Henry Zheng, violin 2

Claudia Lasareff-Mironoff, viola

Jean Hatmaker, cello

Eunice Eifert, videographer

Julie Hinz, sound board operator

### Copyright Acknowledgments

Portions of this liturgy reprinted from *Lutheran Book of Worship*, copyright © 1978 by Augsburg Fortress, *With One Voice*, copyright © 1995 by Augsburg Fortress, and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, copyright © 2006 by Augsburg Fortress. Graphics and Sending Hymn reprinted from *Sundaysandseasons.com*. All rights reserved. All of the above printed and live streamed by permission of Augsburg Fortress liturgies license #SAS018423.

Readings come from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Behold the Marvel of this Night reprinted and livestreamed by permission of OneLicense.net license #A-704569.

## Background Information on the text by George Herbert

George Herbert (1593–1633), well born and Cambridge-educated, was headed for a promising career in government and at court when he decided to enter the ministry in order to serve as a country parson in the tiny church at Bemerton. On his deathbed a short three years later he handed a sheaf of poems to his friend Nicholas Ferrar to either burn or do with as he thought fit. These poems, published in 1633 as *The Temple*, comprise some of the most finely wrought, spiritually astute, beautiful poems in the English language.

Reading a Herbert poem, one is at first struck by what seems to be the plain language and what one critic has called the “artlessness.” But a Herbert poem under its surface simplicity always reveals a complexity of tone and meaning, a theological sophistication, and an intricate weaving of image and theme. Even so, in these poems one is always aware of Herbert’s immense humility.

“Christmas” is a poem in two parts. The text of the piece we hear today is the first part of the poem. In this poem the speaker and his horse have ridden all day and, exhausted and distracted (having pursued pleasure until there is no more pleasure to be had), stop at the first inn available. In this place he finds his “deare, My dearest Lord,” who has been waiting until the “grief of pleasures brought me to him.” In other words, pleasure pursued for its own sake brings restlessness and dissatisfaction, but Christ is present at this inn to give “sweet relief” to all passersby. The speaker describes Christ as the glorious Son of God whose light “contracted” into human form as a baby in a manger, also found in the stable of an inn. Since the speaker’s dark, brutish soul belongs to Christ, he prays that Christ would dress the speaker’s soul and in doing so find a better lodging than a “rack,” the place for hay or straw that the manger was. “Rack” also refers to an instrument of torture, or the cross. In furnishing the speaker’s soul, Christ will also redeem the speaker.

Jill Peláez Baumgaertner



# Welcome to Grace Lutheran Church

We are glad that you are worshipping with us!

If you are visiting us for the first time or would like to learn more about Grace, please complete this form, detach, and place it in the offering plate.

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

Check all that apply:

- ☐ I am visiting Grace for the first time.
- ☐ I would like to know more about Grace Church.
- ☐ I am interested in a path toward membership.
- ☐ I would like to know more about Grace School.
- ☐ I would like to receive Grace’s weekly e-mail,  
*Sunday Is Coming.*
- ☐ I would like one of the pastors to contact me  
via (check one) ☐ Phone or ☐ E-mail.

GRACE  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH  
& SCHOOL

7300 Division Street  
River Forest, Illinois 60305  
Phone: (708) 366-6900  
Fax: (708) 366-0966  
[www.graceriverforest.org](http://www.graceriverforest.org)  
[gracechurch@graceriverforest.org](mailto:gracechurch@graceriverforest.org)

*Bring in, build up, and send out disciples for Jesus Christ*

**David R. Lyle**, Senior Pastor  
**Troy E. Medlin**, Associate Pastor  
**F. Dean Lueking**, Pastor Emeritus  
**Michael D. Costello**, Cantor  
**Jeremy Zimmer**, Assistant Cantor  
**William Koehne**, Principal  
**Gerald Koenig**, Principal Emeritus  
**Pat Gulik**, Parish Nurse  
**Julie Modrich**, Children’s Ministry Coordinator  
**Gwen Gotsch**, Communications Coordinator  
**Jim McClanahan**, Director of Administration & Finance  
**Rich Brooks**, Facilities Manager